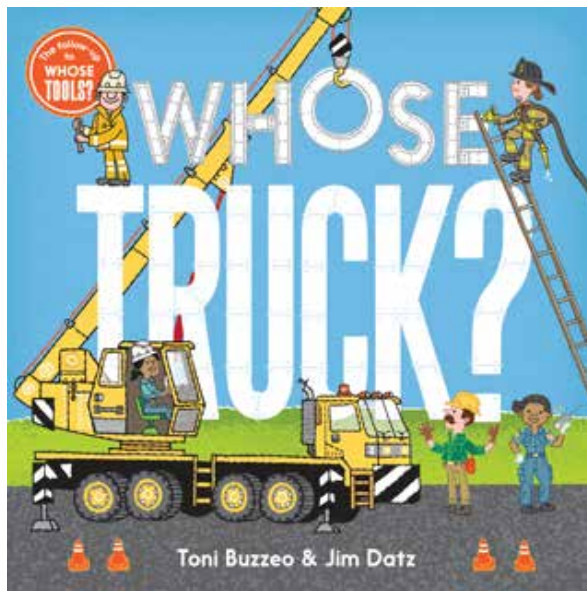


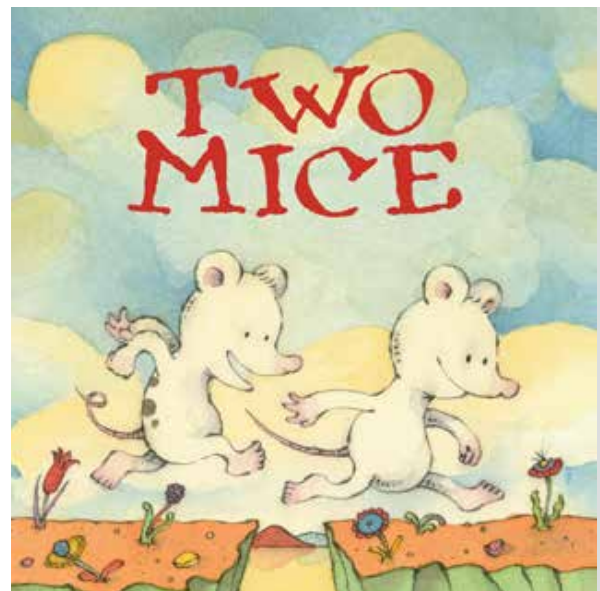
The Reading Chair reviews current, engaging children's books that teachers and parents can use to nurture, educate, and inspire readers birth through age 8. The column—which covers a diverse range of stories and characters—appears in each issue of *Young Children*.



Whose Truck?

By Toni Buzzeeo. Illus. by Jim Datz. 2015. New York: Abrams. 24 pp. Ages birth to 4.

What a fantastic truck book! This lift-the-flap board book (a sequel to Buzzeeo's *Whose Tools?*) offers plenty for truck lovers of many ages. Young toddlers can enjoy the clear and colorful illustrations of various trucks and the sturdy flaps that, when lifted, reveal additional pictures hidden underneath. Older toddlers and preschoolers will appreciate the images of the trucks in action, the interesting new vocabulary describing parts of trucks (including *aerial bucket*, *elevating cylinder*, *operator's cab*), and the rhyming language inviting them to identify each truck. Sealing the deal on this winning package is that the truck operators are multiracial and feature a balance of men and women.



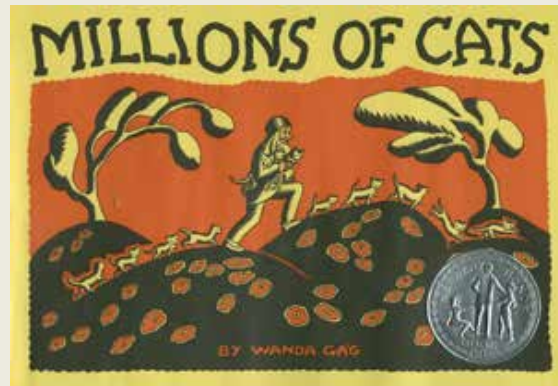
Two Mice

By Sergio Ruzzier. 2015. New York: Clarion Books. 32 pp. Ages 3 to 6.

This is our new favorite preschool math book. Using only the numbers 1, 2, and 3, Ruzzier weaves a tension-filled story about two mice whose adventures bring them in and out of danger. A rich social-emotional overlay depicts feelings of joy, disappointment, fear, and friendship. Though seemingly simple, number patterning makes this an interesting and sophisticated read. And can you spot the one egg that hatches into twins? Perhaps inspired by his Italian roots, Ruzzier uses a Tuscan color palette and European-style details, from the tile work on the roof to the bed frames. This small book is sparse on text but big on magic.

Forever Favorites

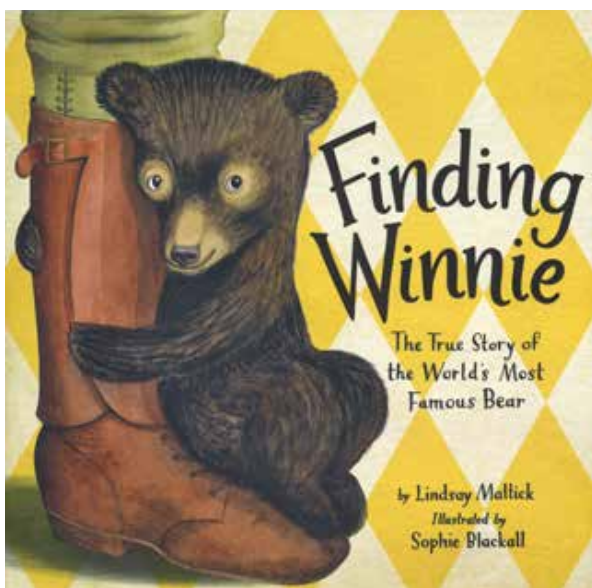
“Forever Favorites” is a new feature in the Reading Chair column. In each issue, we’ll feature one classic book to reintroduce teachers to these old favorites, which are often overshadowed by new releases. Reading the classics to young children is critically important. These time-tested stories stand up to years’ worth of repeated readings. Children thrive on repetition, and we know that these books, with their standout storytelling, are ones you’ll want to read again and again. Sharing the classics gives children a common culture to grow into, something they can share across generations and geographical lines. The classics offer children a literary heritage to love.



Millions of Cats

By Wanda Gág. 1928. New York: Putnam. 32 pp.
Ages 3 to 7.

In 1929, children’s literature was picking up steam, and the Newbery Awards were less than 10 years old. That was the year *Millions of Cats*, the oldest picture book still in print today, won a Newbery Honor. Its relevance for over 85 years is a testament to the timeless qualities of the book. The quirky story, both believable and mysterious, remains enticing to children. A husband seeks to adopt a cat for his wife but ends up bringing home millions of them. The millions of cats drink up an entire pond in one sip. Later, they eat each other up and disappear. The book’s memorable refrain (“Hundreds of cats / Thousands of cats / Millions and billions and trillions of cats”) is something that readers carry into adulthood. The black-and-white lithograph illustrations are so strong that one forgets the lack of color. And the story’s moral is timeless: pride and greed lead to trouble. Modesty is the foundation of a good life.

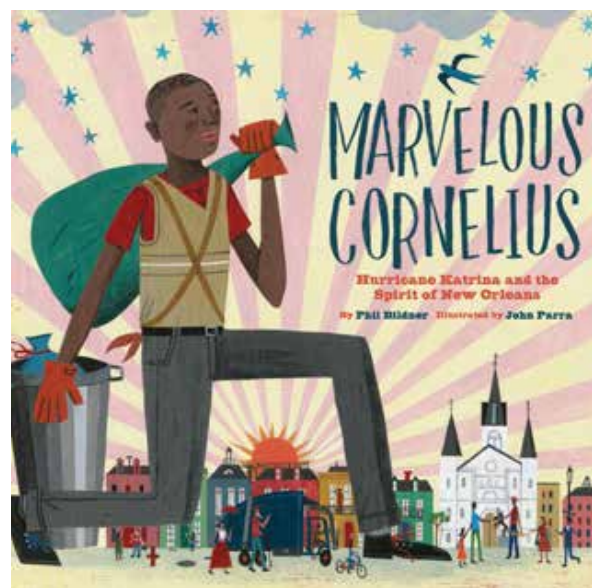


Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World's Most Famous Bear

By Lindsay Mattick. Illus. by Sophie Blackall. 2015. New York: Little, Brown. 56 pp. Ages 4 and up.

This is the true story of the origins of Winnie-the-Pooh. Narrated in the present day by a mother speaking to her young son Cole, the story offers an enchanting marriage of past and present. As veterinarian Harry Colebourn prepares to leave his home in Canada to treat the military's horses during World War I, he happens upon a bear cub in need of rescuing. Harry brings the cub along and names it Winnie after Harry's hometown of Winnipeg. Harry brings Winnie to England and, knowing the cub can't come to the frontlines, finds it a home at the London Zoo.

At the zoo, a young boy named Christopher Robin Milne takes a liking to Winnie, even visiting the bear inside its cage. Christopher Robin's father, A. A. Milne, writes books about the pair—the stories of Winnie-the-Pooh. Finally, readers learn that the mother narrating this story for Cole is the book's author, Lindsay Mattick, great-granddaughter of Harry Colebourn. Winner of the 2016 Randolph Caldecott Medal, the book is a feast of plot twists and new facts that reveal familiar characters. Photos from the Colebourn family collection line the last few pages of the book and make the mythical Winnie-the-Pooh a very real part of history.



Marvelous Cornelius: Hurricane Katrina and the Spirit of New Orleans

By Phil Bildner. Illus. by John Parra. 2015. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. 40 pp. Ages 3 to 7.

Cornelius Washington was a real-life hero from New Orleans. "A wizard of trash cans," as one reporter called him, Cornelius found purpose in his work and spread love through the streets that he cleaned. After Hurricane Katrina hit, the city was in shambles and garbage was everywhere. The spirit and resilience of residents and volunteers like Cornelius brought the city back to life. In this fictionalized version of Cornelius's story, he doubts whether one man can make a dent in restoring the city, but he rises to the challenge and inspires the community to join him.

Readers will appreciate how hard he works to serve others and do his job well. Bildner's language is rife with hallmarks of New Orleans life: he mentions famous street names (Toulouse, Royal, Chartres); local food (beignets, gumbo); the legendary jazz; and the St. Louis Cathedral. Parra's vibrant art features the architecture, skyline, and natural landscape that surrounds the city. An author's note at the back offers additional context.

Night Animals

By Gianna Marino. 2015. New York: Viking. 40 pp.
Ages 2 to 6.

This book is a hoot! That's an apt description, considering it's all about the hoots and other sounds animals make at night. The tale takes place one evening when a group of night animals find themselves spooked by each other's noises. Influenced by one particularly frightened possum, the foolish animals cower in fear of the ordinary sounds of nighttime. They say to a brave bat passing by, "We're scared of night animals!" The bat remarks, "But you ARE night animals." Realizing that they've been afraid of their own shadows is a relief to this silly bunch.

Set against a pitch-black background, Marino's animals jump off the page with energy and expression. Subplots about a skunk's smell and some children camping nearby add intrigue. Marino extends the story with scenes on the endpapers, and she grounds the book in science by offering facts about each animal on the inside of the book jacket. Share the story in small groups, and expect a lively discussion to ensue.

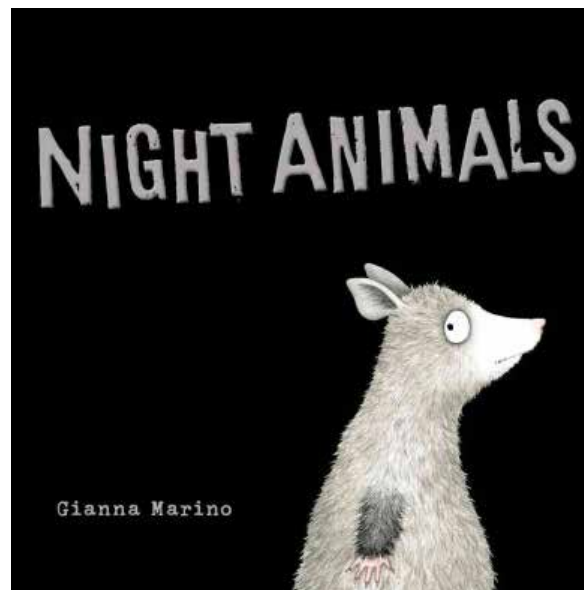
About the authors

Isabel Baker, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of preschool children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children's librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.

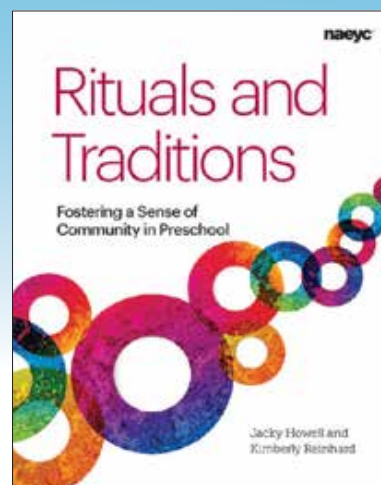
Miriam Baker Schiffer, MFA, is a writer in Brooklyn, New York. She consults on book selections for The Book Vine, in McHenry, Illinois. Miriam's new children's book, *Stella Brings the Family*, was published by Chronicle Books this past May.

The Reading Chair is available at www.naeyc.org/yc/columns.

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